

jecture the value 0 or 1. Again, it is objected that probability cannot help to determine conduct in any particular case, because conduct must depend on the estimates we form of the desirability of certain objects. But this surely involves a confusion between 'the measure of probability' and the 'measure of expectation' (as it is technically called). I conclude, then, that the class-fractional proposition and the probability-proposition cannot be regarded as identical: for (1) we cannot in general pass from the probability to the class-fraction, since this would involve the evolution of knowledge out of ignorance; and (2) we cannot in general pass from the class-fraction to the probability, since this would involve the neglect of any specific information we might possess about the particular case.

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*Vorfragen der Ethik.* Von Dr. CHRISTOPH SIGWART. Freiburg i. B.: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1886. Pp. 48.

In this essay (the publication of which, in tribute to the veteran Zeller, has been already chronicled in *MIND* xii. 477), Prof. Sigwart offers certain general reflections on the ethical problem and the conditions of its solution. The essay is marked by the author's well-known subtlety and acuteness, and deals suggestively—though in the form of aphorism rather than of argument—with some of the chief obscurities and difficulties connected with the basis of morals.

The author begins by contending for the importance of the question of the highest good, reserving for subsequent discussion the true place of moral laws as means to the attainment of this good. The question 'What ought I to do?' arises from the different lines of activity that are open to us, and the conflict of impulses that prompt to action. In this way it is indicated how the discussion of the ethical question must be based on the psychological analysis of activity. The proximate determination of the highest good is sought in the common characteristics which belong to all voluntary action. In this connexion stress is laid upon the following points. In the first place, the end of action is always some actual future condition of real beings to be brought about wholly or in part by the action. No ethical system can afford to disregard consequences in this sense; action always aims at a result—a proposition enforced with reason against the formal generality of Kant's notion of the good will. Throughout the whole essay, indeed, point is given to the author's contentions by a polemic against Kant's view of moral law. In the second place, the character of any and every end is further determined by the nature of volition. No end can affect the will unless it have an emotional character. The realisation of the end must promise some kind of satisfaction—the hope of its attainment giving pleasure, the fear of the opposite giving pain. In discussing this proposition, the author does not fail to shed light on

the difficult question of the relation of feeling to action. The juggle between one's own pleasure and that of others, which has in its day served the purpose of utilitarian moralists, is of course exposed. If it is the feeling of pleasure (or pain) that moves the will, then it is one's own pleasure (or pain) that does so. "There is no such thing as a perfectly unselfish volition. The truth has been properly emphasised that what is no one's gain, and excites a feeling of pleasure in no conscious being, cannot be a rational end of conduct; but when to this it is added that a man should not seek his own satisfaction, but the happiness of others, an equally impossible demand is made. By his nature a man wills only what brings satisfaction to his own personal feeling; in every volition he wills in a certain sense himself, his own happiness." In this sense, not Eudæmonism merely, but Egoism, characterises our volition. From this it would seem to follow—a result familiar to us from Prof. Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics*—that Ethical Hedonism can only be maintained in an universalistic sense through the denial of Psychological Hedonism. Much of what follows in Prof. Sigwart's essay would seem to be devoted to warding off this conclusion. Self-realisation (so his contention may be expressed) is always the end; but the full realisation of the individual implies the self-realisation of the other members of the community. Pleasure is sought in every act of volition; but it is only through a narrow interpretation of what is meant by pleasure that passive fruition comes to be looked upon as the end of all activity. Pleasure is not the mere wages of work; "the pleasure-element, through which the thought of an end stirs to action, may lie in the very consciousness of volition and activity". "Self-love"—but in a wider meaning of the term than that which Kant would allow—is something that cannot be uprooted from our consciousness. "Is not the realisation of a moral ideal in my person only the highest and most perfect efficiency of self-love?"

These considerations, as expressed by Prof. Sigwart, are of the highest value. There can be no doubt that a misleading issue has been sometimes raised in psychology and in ethics by the abrupt antagonism in which pleasure is set to activity and the pursuit of ideal ends, and also in the opposition of self-love and benevolence. Pleasure is the accompaniment of activity, not merely its reward. Yet the real question lies behind as to whether it is merely on account of the greater quantity of accompanying or resultant pleasure that one end is chosen in preference to another. It would seem that in the most energetic activity, whether personal or 'altruistic,' the element of pleasure is often one of the least prominent elements in the conception of the end being realised. The object aimed at is identified with self; so that self-realisation may be called the end. Pleasure or satisfaction comes with its attainment, and often with its pursuit, so that, from the point of view of feeling, it may be said to be self-satisfaction (that is, pleasure) that is gained and that

is sought. But is it sought simply *quâ* pleasure or satisfaction, so that, quantity of pleasure being known, the quality of the end may be disregarded? The author does not affirm this conclusion, being mainly concerned to oppose the Kantian position that moral law takes the form of a necessity of pure reason opposed in nature to every kind of personal feeling. Yet it appears to me that one of the reasons why the rise and growing power of moral ideals is declared to be not only one of the most important but also "one of the most puzzling phenomena of history," is the stress laid, in the psychological part of the essay, on the element of pleasure as the sole stimulus to action, apart from the character of the activity or end to which it belongs.

When the author passes to the further determination of the ethical end, there is much everywhere that is admirable in his statement, if something also that might admit of further discussion. The highest end for a man must be a permanent condition of his nature, and yet such a condition as will recognise the change and progress involved in human life, and the dependence of the individual on nature and his fellow-men. The kinship of man with nature, and his relation to his fellows, forbid the supposition of individual self-sufficiency. Every firmly-conceived end that proceeds from the universal nature of man must be conceived and willed as universal. The end must, therefore, be a common end, which all alike seek, and in which all alike have part: "the notion of a highest good is widened to that of a collective condition of a society of men". The contention here against the separation of private and public morals, of individual and social ethics, is clearly emphasised and of much value. Starting from the individual point of view, there is no little interest in tracing, as the author does, the way in which the perfection of individual ends requires the adoption of the social standpoint. It is here, too, that the transition is made—somewhat too smoothly, as it seems to me—from the 'is' to the 'ought to be' in conduct. From the social nature of the highest good it follows further that all individuals must have the same moral end, and that it can only be reached through the harmonious activity of all. To the attainment of this end moral laws are only means; morality (as is well shown) does not admit of ultimate and satisfactory statement in the form of laws.

The further account of the character and content of the moral end is given in a few suggestive pages. The notion of the highest good is said to stand in need of "a community of men of pure moral disposition," and to be perfectly realisable only on this condition; on the other hand, a moral disposition is defined as "the constant direction of the will to the highest good". To have worked out the mutual relation and the application of these positions, as well as of other suggestions in the essay, would have led the author beyond the limits he has set himself. But the hope may be expressed that this is not his last contribution to the elucidation of ethical questions.

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